

RTTUZYUW RUHHFBA0148 0931558-0000--RUTLAAA,

ZNR 000001 ZZH ZYN

R 021550Z APR 76

FM FBIS BANGKOK

TO RUHMBRA/CINCPACFLT

RUDDMKA/FBIS LONDON

RUEBFGA/VOA WASHDC

RUPDAAA/USAREUR DEPT COFS INTEL HEIDELBERG

RUHQHQA/CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

RUHQHQA/COMTPAC HONOLULU HI

RUHVAAA/CINCPACAF

RUHRADA/CG THIRD MAF OKINAWA JAPAN

RUTLAAA/FBIS WASHDC

PSBK

BT

UNCLAS BBC RUHH

DELHI COMMENTATOR HAILS LAUNCHING OF SAMACHAR NEWS AGENCY

05021550Y

DELHI GENERAL OVERSEAS SERVICE IN ENGLISH 1010 GMT 2 APR 76 BK

((COMMENTARY BY R.G. KAWATRA, FORMER RESIDENT EDITOR OF THE
INDIAN EXPRESS))

((TEXT)) THE LAUNCHING OF A COORDINATED NEWS SERVICE BY

SAMACHAR, THE UNIFIED NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY, IT WAS SOME 2 MONTHS AGO WHEN THE FOUR MAJOR NEWS AGENCIES FUNCTIONING IN INDIA DECIDED TO MERGE TOGETHER, SINCE THEN THEY HAVE BEEN WORKING UNDER ONE NAME, THE MERGER HAS NOW BEEN COMPLETED ORGANIZATIONALLY AS WELL, THUS SAMACHAR STEPS INTO THE FUTURE BACKED BY THE COMBINED RESOURCES OF THE FOUR OLD NEWS AGENCIES.

THE URGE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A STRONG AND A VIABLE NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY WITH A WIDE OPERATIONAL NETWORK CAME FROM A SHARED DESIRE AMONG THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO CREATE A FRAMEWORK FOR THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE WHICH WOULD DO AWAY WITH THE DOMINATION OF THE BIG WESTERN NEWS ORGANIZATIONS, THE NEED WAS STRESSED AT A JOURNALISTS SEMINAR ORGANIZED BY THE DAG HAMMARSKJOLD FOUNDATION AT NEW YORK LAST YEAR AND AT THE QUALIFIED CONFERENCE AT LIMA, IT HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY FELT THAT THE PRESS MUST PLAY A POSITIVE ROLE IN CREATING A BETTER INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING AND PROMOTING THE CONCEPT OF A NEW AND JUST ECONOMIC ORDER.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE WESTERN NEWS AGENCIES, WITH THEIR BIAS OR CHEAP SENSATIONALISM, MORE OFTEN THAN NOT PLAY A NEGATIVE ROLE, THEY OFTEN PRESENT A MIS-SHAPEN PICTURE OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES THEREBY NOT ONLY MISLEADING WESTERN READERS BUT SOWING SUSPICION AND MISTRUST IN ONE DEVELOPING COUNTRY AGAINST ANOTHER, THEY DRAMATIZE TRIVIAL INCIDENTS AND IGNORE BIG EVENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS, A SMALL PROCESSION OF NAKED SADHUS ((MONKS)) IN SOME OUT OF THE WAY PLACE IN INDIA OR A DEMONSTRATION FOR CON PROTECTION RECEIVES WIDE COVERAGE IN THE AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN PRESS BECAUSE SUCH STORIES ARE SUPPOSED TO SHOW AN INDIA STILL STEPPED IN IGNORANCE AND SUPERSTITION, THE VAST PROGRESS MADE BY THIS COUNTRY IN INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY, THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF ITS ENGINEERS, SCIENTISTS, INVENTORS AND THINKERS AND THE SUCCESS OBTAINED BY IT IN THE CRUSADE AGAINST SOCIAL AND

AND SOCIAL COUNCIL AND OTHER SUCH BODIES, WHERE MATTERS OF GREAT INTEREST TO THE DEVELOPING WORLD ARE DISCUSSED, GET LITTLE COVERAGE;

THE NEED FOR A FULLFLEDGED NONALIGNED NEWS AGENCY IS STILL AN IDE AND HAS NOT TAKEN A CONCRETE SHAPE; THE ORGANIZATIONAL, FINANCIAL AND VARIOUS OTHER RELATED QUESTIONS ARE BEING DISCUSSED FROM ALL ANGLES. A FEW DAYS BACK THERE WAS A MEETING AT TUNIS OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE NONALIGNED COUNTRIES AND THE MATTER WILL BE FURTHER PURSUED IN DELHI IN A FEW MONTHS. IT IS ALSO LIKELY TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE NONALIGNED SUMMIT IN COLOMBO NEXT AUGUST;

THE FORMATION OF A NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY IN INDIA IS TO BE VIEWED IN THIS WIDER CONTEXT. THE CREATION OF A NONALIGNED AGENCY, THE GATHERING, POOLING AND EXCHANGING NEWS IS NOT POSSIBLE UNLESS THE NONALIGNED COUNTRIES HAVE OFFICIAL NATIONAL NEWS AGENCIES ABLE TO PRESENT A TRUE PICTURE OF THEIR COUNTRY TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD. THE TASK NEEDS LARGE FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND A RESERVE OF PROFESSIONAL SKILLS. NOT ONE OF THE FOUR INDIAN NEWS AGENCIES NOW MERGED COULD CLAIM TO BE FINANCIALLY VIABLE. EVEN THE BIGGEST OF THEM, THE PRESS TRUST OF INDIA, LACKED RESOURCES TO MAINTAIN ITS OWN CORRESPONDENTS IN ALL THE IMPORTANT WORLD CAPITALS. PURCHASE OF FOREIGN NEWS FROM INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES DID NOT PROVIDE A BALANCED FLOW AND VERY LITTLE ABOUT INDIA APPEARED IN FOREIGN NEWSPAPERS.

THE NEW UNIFIED NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY WILL BE FREE FROM MOST OF THESE HANDICAPS. WITH ITS COMBINED RESOURCES IT WILL BE ABLE TO EXPAND ITS INTERNAL AND FOREIGN SERVICES. AT HOME IT WILL PROVIDE A WIDER AND MORE VARIED COVERAGE AND THERE WILL BE NO DUPLICATION OF EFFORTS. IT WILL BE ABLE TO EXTEND ITS ACTIVITIES TO VILLAGE AREAS HITHERTO NEGLECTED. IT IS GOOD THAT SAMACHAR PROPOSES TO HAVE SEPARATE DESKS FOR IN-DEPTH ANALYTICAL COVERAGE OF ACTIVITIES IN SPORTS, SCIENCE, EDUCATION, CULTURE AND PUBLIC HEALTH.

NEWSPAPERS IN THE DISTRICTS, AS THE PRIME MINISTER HAS OFTEN SAID
THE GOVERNMENT WELCOMES CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM; SAMACHAR WILL
BE COMPLETELY FREE TO DRAW ATTENTION TO WHATEVER SHORTCOMINGS IT
SEES ANYWHERE, IT IS ONLY A NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY LIKE THIS THAT
CAN PRESENT A TRUE AND OBJECTIVE PICTURE OF THE COUNTRY TO THE PEOPLE
AT HOME AND TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD; 021010 SB/SUWAN/HENDRIX/DK

02/1620Z APR

BT

00143

NNNN